

**Indiana Commission for Early Learning and School Readiness
Meeting Minutes for June 22, 2004**

I. Opening Remarks by Governor Joseph Kernan

Governor Kernan opened the first meeting of the Commission at 1:30pm in Conference Room B of Indiana Government Center South. A quorum was present. Commission members attending included:

- **Dr. Suellen Reed**, Rushville, co-chair
- **Mary Downes**, South Bend, co-chair
- **Rep. Ralph Ayres**, Chesterton, representing the House of Representatives
- **Sen. Gary Dillon**, Pierceton, representing the Senate
- **Rep. Gregory Porter**, Indianapolis, representing the House of Representatives
- **Sen. Connie Sipes**, New Albany, representing the Senate
- **Marilyn Schultz**, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (State Budget Agency)
- **Cheryl Sullivan**, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (FSSA)
- **Patricia G. Burton**, Indianapolis, representing public school principals
- **Wendy Robinson**, Fort Wayne, representing public school superintendents with full-day kindergarten
- **Ena Shelley**, Indianapolis, representing teacher training programs
- **Robert Marra**, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (Dept. of Education)
- **Mary E. Davis**, Richmond, representing full-day kindergarten teachers
- **Pearl Prince**, Gary, representing pre-school cooperatives/early learning centers
- **Dr. Denna Renbarger**, Lapel, representing directors of pre-school cooperatives
- **Brent Leichty**, Bourbon, representing parents
- **Marlane Rae Tisdale**, Indianapolis, representing local school boards
- **Lynn Silvey**, Pendleton, representing parents
- **Kay Harmless**, Indianapolis, representing the Indiana Child Care Fund
- **Kim Dodson**, Westfield, representing children with disabilities
- **David Holt**, Indianapolis, representing business
- **A. Nanette Bowling**, Kokomo, representing Head Start providers
- **Jenny Sarabia**, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member

- **Dianna Wallace**, New Castle , representing the Indiana Assoc. for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC)
- **Debbie Beeler**, Mitchell, representing communities
- **Timothy Dunnuck**, Bloomington, representing the Child Care Center (at Indiana University)
- **Dr. Carol Touloukian**, M.D., Bloomington, representing pediatricians
- **Britt Magneson**, South Bend, representing curriculum development specialists
- **Dr. Maria Del Rio-Hoover**, M.D., Evansville , representing child development

The Governor thanked Dr. Suellen Reed, Mary Downes, and Commission members for taking on the charge of this important work on behalf of early learning and school readiness. As a result of a recommendation from the Indiana Education Roundtable, the Governor commented that the stage was set to make an investment for Indiana. He spoke of a responsibility to make sure that each child's potential is fully realized, and cited a study from the Federal Reserve Bank that indicated the most important investment can be made in quality early learning and full-day kindergarten. He expressed a hope that giant strides can be made instead of baby steps. He thanked the Commission members, and charged them to go forth with their leadership and guidance. In closing, the Governor expressed an appreciation to the members for bringing their perspective, expertise, and enthusiasm to this work.

II. Welcome by Dr. Suellen Reed

Dr. Reed reiterated thoughts of Governor Kernan, and assured him that he would not be let down. Co-chairs, Dr. Suellen Reed and Mary Downes, invited Commission members to introduce themselves.

III. Introductions of Commission Members

Mary Downes began introductions. The Commission members introduced themselves and briefly stated who they represented. Refer to the mailing or the Early Learning and School Readiness Commission (ELSRC) website (<http://www.in.gov/elsrc>) for a complete list of Commission members.

IV. Overview of Indiana's P-16 Plan for Improving Student Achievement by Cheryl Orr

Dr. Reed expressed the need to become familiar with where the work of the Commission fits with all the other things going on in education. Dr. Reed introduced Cheryl Orr who provided an overview of Indiana's P-16 plan. Cheryl Orr talked the about history and establishment of the Indiana Education Roundtable. The group was formalized in 1999 and was given some policy-making responsibilities, including making recommendations on improving student achievement to the Governor, Superintendent, and the General

Assembly. Cheryl provided information about the P-16 plan. (Refer to handout or ELSRC website for details).

The P-16 Plan includes 70 recommendations in 10 key areas. In the Early Learning and School Readiness component, the Roundtable identified eight recommendations (below). The charge of the ELSRC is to focus on details behind these recommendations and how to make these a reality. These recommendations frame the work of the Commission.

Roundtable Recommendations:

1. Involve parents in planning and implementation of all learning and school readiness efforts.
2. Provide parents, pediatricians, and others who work with children with information regarding cognitive development and the importance of reading to infants and children.
3. Guarantee access to appropriate health screenings and high-quality developmental checklists for all children birth through age 7.
4. Focus on reading.
5. Make sure every child has access to high quality programs that help prepare them for school.
6. Ask Indiana employers to invest in the state's future workforce by providing or partnering to provide high-quality child care options for employees.
7. Make high quality Kindergarten available for all children.
8. Establish an Early Learning and School Readiness Commission for coordinating birth to age six early learning and school readiness experiences, giving greater priority to children and family issues, and working to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of programs that serve children and families.

Please refer to P-16 Phase 1 Plan or Cheryl's Powerpoint presentation, which is available on the ELSRC website.

Cheryl reminded the Commission how far we have come in education in Indiana, but there's still much more to do as many Indiana children fail to receive the early learning experiences necessary to enter school ready to learn. Cheryl stressed that the demand for knowledge and skills is only going to increase, and it's not going to go away or lessen. Phase I of the P-16 Plan was adopted in October 2003. Phase II of the Plan should be finished in time for the 2005 General Assembly.

V. Overview of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant by Dr. Judy Ganser

Dr. Suellen Reed introduced Judy Ganser who gave an overview of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant (ECCS). ECCS supports and complements the work of the Education Roundtable and the work this Commission. The goal is to plan and implement a more coordinated and comprehensive system of services for young children and their families. The work of the ECCS is centered on Five Components: Parent Education, Family Support, Mental Health and Social/Emotional Development, Early

Care and Education, and Access to Insurance/Medical Home. Information about ECCS and Dr. Ganser's slide show can be found on the ELSRC website.

Following Dr. Ganser's presentation, Mary Downes reiterated how both presentations bring common themes which coincide with the charge of the Early Learning Commission.

VI. ELSR Commission Work Plan / Timeline

Due to the charge to have a report to the Governor and Dr. Reed by December 31, 2004, Mary Downes spoke of the need to compress the points in the Executive Order and P-16 Plan into 4-7 strands. She noted that the ECCS will work with the Early Learning Commission in order to leverage efforts and avoid duplication.

The group spent time discussing the inventory of early learning and school readiness services that needs to be conducted. Dr. Reed stated the need to look at services and resources available, and create a matrix of what is available and for whom. What people are not here that would have services available? What resources/opportunities are not represented? Who are they? Who receives them? How do they find out about them? Are they high quality?

Cheryl noted that the Executive Order spells out four key things in #6 (of the E.O.), which should frame the work in creating this inventory.

Do we need to recommend reorganization? The Executive Order states: "Services and resources should be reorganized either through administrative or legislative action." Before the Early Learning Commission can examine costs, transitions between services, etc, we first need to know what is out there.

Dr. Maria Del Rio Hoover asked about a baseline summary of the agencies and services available, and how they serve the children. Dr. Reed responded that there are lists available, but different depending on the agency. Dr. Reed then spoke about creating a matrix or continuum of known services and resources available throughout the state.

Mary Downes shared that the Lt. Governor's Peak Performance Project is working on a comprehensive inventory of the state services for children including Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), the Department of Health, and the Department of Education.

Sen. Sipes and Dr. Del Rio Hoover stated the need for the Commission to understand definitions of each of the programs (i.e. Bright Futures) so that gaps can be filled accurately and appropriately. Cheryl Orr talked about the Roundtable's work on the P-16 Plan, which began to include a list of programs serving children. This early work will also be added to the more comprehensive inventory.

Sen. Dillon asked for clarification about the inventory. He noted that the Commission members have different levels of knowledge, and asked for more direction.

Dr. Reed spoke of Reading First as an example of a program that is available, but only to certain populations or groups. She also talked about how different communities have greater strengths in some areas than others. Dr. Reed reiterated that we need to know “where we are.” She noted that part of the purpose of the inventory is not only to find out what is going on to make the Early Learning Commission more knowledgeable, but also to what extent does it operate, and then what are the obstacles that are keeping it from going further.

Mary Downes reviewed the Executive Order for the purpose of clarity. The Executive Order was sent to Commission member prior to the meeting, and can also be viewed on the ELSRC website. The inventory will help get core knowledge of what we have in the state, both in urban and rural areas.

Dr. Reed spoke of some employers, such as Lilly, that provide child care for their employees. She expressed the need to explore what is already known and what we already have so that we can start putting the pieces together.

Marilyn Shultz talked about the need to identify markers of success of certain programs. We need to know what works and what does not. Why are programs more successful than others? She shared the view that the state is spending a lot of money on children, and has a need to know that we are spending it in the most effective way possible.

To build on the expertise of the Early Learning Commission, Dr. Reed talked about questions for Commission members, such as: Who are you? What do you do? Who do you do it for? What are the obstacles that you are facing? How do you know success?

Kay Harmless asked for a common email to send information to the Early Learning Commission. Dr. Reed asked Kathy Politz to give her email to the members. Kathy serves as the Staff Liaison representing the Department of Education to the Commission.

Mary reminded members to fill out the contact information forms, and to send the notarized oath to the Secretary of State’s office. The notarized oath was sent to members at time of notification of appointment. Dr. Reed and Mary Downes clarified the next steps for the Commission; which involve looking at strands in the Executive Order, and prioritization.

Dr. Del Rio Hoover mentioned that one of the problems is that we are so fragmented, speak many different languages, use different tests and instruments, etc. The Commission can find a common “form” that can unify. We can bring it all together and make it more cohesive with the help of P-16 and ECCS.

Dr. Reed agreed that it would be helpful to have a common language. She expressed the need to use common instruments to exchange information. She stated that we want the “ideal.”

The Early Learning Commission discussed the need to come together on terms (i.e. developmentally appropriate practice, preschool, etc.).

Mary Davis talked about brainstorming and suggested work meetings in order not to duplicate efforts among the Early Learning Commission. Dr. Reed suggested using the next Commission meeting as a work session.

VII. Success by Six Program Presentation by Cecilia Johnson

Cecilia Johnson from United Way of Central Indiana presented information on the school readiness initiative supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Making Connections Project, the Indianapolis Mayor’s office, and the United Way’s Success by Six. Cognitive goals of school readiness are not just a challenge for minority groups or children from low-income households. There is a need for a coordinated system of services. Refer to the ELSRC website for the slideshow presented by Cecilia Johnson.

Cheryl Orr commented that the Roundtable sent a team to the Success by Six National Conference to gain information and resources as they worked on drafting the P-16 Plan.

Dr. Reed announced the date for the next meeting, and described some of the goals for that session, and reminded members to read the P-16 Plan and review the Executive Order.

VIII. Members Final Comments

The Commission members’ final comments centered around the following themes:

- There’s been a lot of work done.
- “Energized confusion.” We’re enthusiastic about working together.
- Honor to be here. Coordination of agencies. Family support.
- How to do it all? Good opportunity. Appreciate work that’s been done before.
- A lot to learn.
- Important to educate the next generation. Children who don’t get a proper start never catch up. Tragic.
- Thanks to Gov. Kernan and Dr. Reed for having the courage to put this in place.
- Important to not forget that they are children. Put the pressure on the environment and educators instead of on the children. Environments should be ready for the children. We know what quality preschool is. Commission will open their hearts and will serve young children.
- Whole field is complex. Public doesn’t understand. Making all people aware of why this is important, whether or not you are in the field or have a young child.
- Get the organizations together and get the word out to the parents.
- Great need to reach the youngsters at age 3 and 4 before they reach school.

- Today has acted as a stimulus to help me become aware of a variety of systems.
- Honored to be here excited about the tasks.
- Important not to get frustrated in the process of the task ahead.
- Hope that at the end we have one path. This process is too important not to finish.
- Expressed the importance of prevention and bridging communication between physicians, pediatricians, and teachers. Mental health is an important aspect of what we're doing.
- What is available for every child in this state? Bigger challenge, what isn't available?
- All children are special.
- Get our arrows going in the same direction.
- Pleased with sincerity and energy of the group.
- Importance of starting with prenatal development.
- Desire to bring recommendations to Representatives and Senators.
- Organize and think about things that are really important as far as the future of our state.
- This group coming together is exciting, but also difficult to make it "gel." We all want to get going and take the first step. We want to use the talents, brains, and energy of this group.

IX. Dr. Reed and Mary Downes Adjourned the Meeting at 3:40pm.